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MSGNO 81 (STXX) 23F *17/11/82* *00:51*
ZCZC 05:47:54Z (ST)

CONFIDENTIAL

STATE

ACTION: NONE INFO: ALA/G-2, ALA/M-2, ALA/MC, ALA/MC/D, ALA/MC/E1, ALA/MC/E2, ALA/MC/M2, ALA/MC/R, ALA/MC/RAE, ALA/MC/RAM, ALA/PO/LA, ALA/RMX-2, ODPN-N, ODPS-S, OGI/SC/TW, OGI/GI/ALA, OGI/IIC/IB, OGI/IIC/PT, OGI/IIC/T1, OGI/IIC/T2, OGI/IIC/TG-2, OOE/EI/EI, RF, TF-E ( ), ZSAG/MEB, ZSAG/PPB, ZSAG/SEB, FILE, LA/CATF-3, LA/MTF-2, LA/RR, CI/FL, CR/WH, EPS/EG-2, ICS/OHC/LA, NICAG/LA, NIO/LA, OGI-2, OIA/ERPS, OIA/LFMEA, SAG/MEB, SAG/PPB, SAG/SEB-5, (23/w) A2K-2, A2P-2, A2A, A2B, A2S, A2T, A2V, A2W, A2X, A2Y, AOC, A3F-2, S2F, S4A, S6D, S6C, S6T, S6F, S6G-2, F2C,

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P2 9895913 SCR LC 9895913

TOR: 170415Z NOV 82

RR RUEAIIB
ZNY CCCCC ZDC STATE ZFH
UTS4DA1
RR RUEHC
DE RUEHGT #8591/01 3201715
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 161643Z NOV 82
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1977
INFO RUEHCR/AMEMBASSY BELIZE 2781
RUESMG/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 8734
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 1704
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 4960
RUESJO/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 9053
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 9257
RUESTE/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 9359
RUEHOT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1253
RULPALJ/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
BT
EZ1:
C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 08591
EZ2:
E.O. 12356: DECL: 11/15/88
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PINR, SHUM, MX, GT
SUBJECT: CURRENT SITUATION IN HUEHUETENANGO
REFS: (A) GUATEMALA 7790
- (B) GUATEMALA 7741
- (C) GUATEMALA 7935

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)
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2. SUMMARY: SOURCE CAME TO EMBASSY ON NOVEMBER 9 TO DISCUSS CURRENT SITUATION IN HUEHUETENANGO; HE HAS LIVED IN THE ABOVE DEPARTMENT FOR THE LAST 26 YEARS. SOURCE SPOKE FREELY OF THE SITUATION IN HUEHUETENANGO BEFORE THE ARMY REASSERTED CONTROL IN LATE MAY, OF LIFE UNDER EFFECTIVE GUERRILLA CONTROL IN THE LAST YEAR, OF THE CONFLICTS BETWEEN EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS, OF REFUGEE CAMPS IN MEXICO AND THE PROBABILITY OF GUERRILLA CONTROL OF SOME OF THOSE CAMPS, OF THE LEVEL OF DEATH AND VIOLENCE IN THE DEPARTMENT, AND OF CHANGES IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE LOCAL

State Dept. review completed

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POPULATION TOWARD THE ARMY SINCE THE COUP OF MARCH 23. END SUMMARY.

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3. SOURCE HAS LIVED IN HUEHUETENANGO FOR 26 YEARS. HIS WORK TOOK HIM TO ALL AREAS OF HUEHUETENANGO AND EL QUICHE. HE LIVED MORE OR LESS PERMANENTLY IN BARILLAS, A MUNICIPAL CAPITAL IN NORTH CENTRAL HUEHUETENANGO. TWO YEARS AGO HE MOVED HIS FAMILY TO HUEHUETENANGO PROPER AFTER HAVING BEEN THREATENED AT GUNPOINT BY GUERRILLAS FOR THE THIRD TIME. SOURCE MAINTAINS CLOSE CONTACTS WITH FRIENDS AND FELLOW WORKERS IN THE AREA.

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4. SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT PRIOR TO THE ARMY REASSERTING CONTROL IN HUEHUETENANGO IN LATE MAY OF 1982, THE GUERRILLAS WERE IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE NORTHERN TWO-THIRDS OF HUEHUETENANGO AND EL QUICHE. THE GUERRILLAS CALLED THESE AREAS "LIBERATED ZONES" AND WERE WELL ON THEIR WAY TO ESTABLISHING A PARALLEL GOVERNMENT. THE GUERRILLAS CONTROLLED INTERNAL TRAVEL, STAMPED COUNTLESS DOCUMENTS WITH THEIR OWN MARKINGS AND EVEN REVIEWED SERMONS BY PROTESTANT PASTORS. MANY REFUGEES NOW IN MEXICO HAVE IDENTIFICATION CARDS (CEDULAS) STAMPED BY GUERRILLAS; THIS MAKES IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO RETURN TO GUATEMALA.

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5. AS THE ARMY BEGAN ITS PUSH IN MAY TO DRIVE THE GUERRILLAS OUT, THE INSURGENTS BECAME EVER MORE VIOLENT. SOURCE SAID THAT NORTHWESTERN HUEHUETENANGO IS STILL HEAVILY INFILTRATED WITH GUERRILLAS. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF AREAS OF CONTINUING GUERRILLA ACTIVITY CLOSELY MATCHED BRIEFINGS GIVEN TO EMBASSY OFFICERS AND REPORTED IN REPTELS. SOURCE SAID THAT CERTAIN SMALL TOWNS AND REFUGEE CAMPS ON THE MEXICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER ARE UNDER "COMPLETE GUERRILLA CONTROL". THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE, HE SAID, OF THE CAMPS IN MEXICO THAT BORDER NORTHWESTERN HUEHUETENANGO. SOURCE HAS HEARD FROM PEOPLE IN THE AREA THAT THE GUERRILLAS STRONGLY OPPOSE A PLAN BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT TO MOVE THE CAMPS AWAY FROM THE BORDER AREA BECAUSE THEY WOULD LOSE THEIR COVER. IN FACT, HE ASSERTED THAT IN SOME CAMPS THE GUERRILLAS WILL NOT ALLOW REFUGEES TO LEAVE. SOURCE ASSERTED THAT THIS SITUATION IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS IS "COMMON KNOWLEDGE" AMONG THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN HUEHUETENANGO.

guerillas oppose mx efforts to move refugees away from border because would lose their cover

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6. THE CIVIL DEFENSE PATROLS, HE ADDED, HAVE BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE IN HUEHUETENANGO. PRIOR TO THE MARCH COUP, SOURCE POINTED OUT, TRAVEL FROM HUEHUETENANGO PROPER TO BARILLAS WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE. IN A RECENT TRIP, HE WAS STOPPED SOME 35 TIMES ON THE ROAD BY CIVIL DEFENSE PATROLS. EVERY PATROL HAD AT LEAST A FEW MEN WITH RIFLES OR MUSKETS.

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7. SOURCE ALSO MADE THE FOLLOWING MORE GENERAL OBSERVATIONS. IN HIS VIEW, THE GREATEST CENTER OF GUERRILLA RECRUITMENT HAS BEEN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN MIGUEL ACATAN, HUEHUETENANGO. HE DID NOT KNOW WHY THIS WAS SO. SOURCE HAS HEARD SPECULATION THAT THE GUERRILLAS IN HUEHUETENANGO HAVE AT LEAST ONE HELICOPTER AT THEIR DISPOSAL. HE SAID HE FOUND THIS VERY DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE AND WOULD NOT HAVE MENTIONED IT EXCEPT A TRUSTED FRIEND OF HIS INSISTED IT WAS SO. THIS FRIEND WAS ALLEGEDLY FORCED TO LOAD FOOD ON A GUERRILLA HELICOPTER OUTSIDE OF SAN MIGUEL ACATAN. SOURCE WAS STILL SKEPTICAL, BUT THOUGHT THE INFORMATION WORTH MENTIONING.

8. COMMENT: SOURCE'S VIEWS WERE BASED ON YEARS OF LIVING IN HUEHUETENANGO. NEVERTHELESS, HE HAD CERTAIN BIASES WHICH HE FREELY ADMITTED. HE WAS CONVINCED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES IN HUEHUETENANGO HAD "STIRRED UP THE PEOPLE" WITH A GOSPEL OF "SOCIAL ACTIVISM". THIS WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE, HE THOUGHT, OF THE MARYKNOLL ORDER AFTER 1962 OR 1963. HE WAS CLEARLY PLEASED THAT EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM HAD MADE SIGNFICANT INROADS IN HUEHUETENANGO. SOURCE WAS CLEARLY PRO-GOG, BUT SPOKE QUITE FRANKLY OF THE FEAR PEOPLE HAD OF THE ARMY PRIOR TO MARCH, 1982. THIS FEAR, HE ASSERTED, HAS LARGELY DISAPPEARED. SOURCE BELIEVED THAT THE PEOPLE OF HUEHUETENANGO DESIRE PEACE AT ALL COSTS. IF THE ARMY CAN RESTORE ORDER IN THE DEPARTMENT, PREVIOUS FEROCITY AND HARSHNESS WILL BE LARGELY FORGOTTEN. HE THOUGHT THIS PROCESS WAS ALREADY TAKING PLACE. END COMMENT. CHAPIN

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